

INDIANA STATE POLICE IDACS SECTION
LESSON PLAN

LECTURE: AREAS OF LIABILITY COURSE

INSTRUCTOR:

SUBJECT MATTER	REMARKS	(STUDENT USE)
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IDACS AREAS OF LIABILITY

I. Introduction

Administrators have the responsibility of directing all areas within their agency. The improper use of IDACS/NCIC/NLETS System Data has become an important area of concern, not only for IDACS and NCIC officials, but for local agencies as well. This seminar is designed to increase the awareness of the problems that can occur in using system data, and what can be done to help minimize the risk of liability.

NCIC tracks litigation around the country concerning the maintenance and dissemination of criminal justice data and publishes items of interest in a pamphlet entitled "Areas Of Liability for the criminal Justice Information System Administrator" which will be used during this seminar and is suggested reading.

II. Objectives

At the completion of this lecture, departmental administrators and upper level management personnel will be able to orally explain many important areas where their agency can become more effective in managing IDACS/NCIC/NLETS system data.

III. Awareness Of The Problem

There have been many documented civil law suits for improper use of system data. The following are a few of the more famous cases from which valuable lessons can be learned.

A.

1. Sheila Jackson-Stossier was arrested/detained in New Orleans, based solely on an NCIC hit in which a Sheila Jackson (similar name) was wanted for parole violation in Houston. She was detained six (6) days before release.

- a. Arresting officer/agency did not compare descriptive data from the hit with her physical description (there were many differences).
 - b. Arresting officer/agency did not attempt to confirm the hit with the originating agency before arrest and detention.
2. A law suit resulted in a judgement against the arresting officer/agency.
3. To avoid this kind of' liability, follow established guidelines:
- a. Operators/Officers should be trained to compare descriptive data on "hits" with person being detained, and
 - b. operators/officers should confirm "hits" before taking any enforcement action.
- 1) "hits" are lead information only!
4. Also see Indiana 240 IAC 5-1-1, ... restrictions on use:

... The IDACS provides information for decision making, by investigators and patrolmen. The information furnished through IDACS shall be evaluated with other facts known to the officer and investigators at the scene. IDACS is an information tool. It is no substitute for professional police judgment.

When an agency receives a positive response (wanted notice) from IDACS or NCIC, if the request is urgent, a "U" will be shown in the Priority Field, an immediate follow-up confirmation request with the agency that originated the record in the system is necessary before any enforcement action is taken. Likewise, the originating agency has an obligation to supply a substantive response within 10 minutes to the inquiring agency. However, if the request is routine, a "R" will be shown in the Priority Field, and the response time is up

to one (1) hour. Both of these responses shall include a confirmation or denial of the wanted notice, or the length of time it will take to respond...

B. Walcowski v. Macomb County & the State

1. Walcowski was stopped on a broken tail light violation and arrested based on an NCIC wanted person hit that was in file with the wrong charge (purger, which is a felony). Subject was actually wanted for contempt of court (a misdemeanor).
2. Subject sued for battery, assault, false arrest, unlawful imprisonment, and defamation. In the same action, the subject sued the director of the Michigan State System.
3. The court ruled that the State was immune from this liability, because the entering agency is responsible for the records in file and not the overseeing agency.
4. To avoid this kind of liability:
 - a. Quality control procedures should be implemented by your agency which includes a third party checking procedure.
 - b. Established validation procedures should more closely be followed.
5. Also see Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-9... Quality Assurance...

User Agency agrees to abide by accepted quality assurance methods. This includes compliance with validation procedures as specified in the Indiana Administrative Code, NCIC serious error procedures, and IDACS Quality Control procedures.

User Agency further agrees to establish local procedures whereby updates to the wanted files are reviewed for accuracy by comparing the update with supporting

documentation. This comparison shall be made by a person other than the operator who accomplished the update and the investigating officer who ordered it.

and Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-7,
Validation of records:

All IDACS user agencies shall validate, on a periodic basis, all IDACS and NCIC wanted records entered on their authority. Validation of records shall be in conformity and compliance with guidelines set forth by IDACS and NCIC.

Validation (according to current NCICI/IDACS policy) obligates the originating agency to confirm the record is COMPLETE, ACCURATE and is still OUTSTANDING or ACTIVE.

Validation is accomplished by reviewing the original entry and current supporting documents and by recent consultation with any appropriate complainant, victim, prosecutor, court, motor vehicle registry files or other appropriate source or individual. In the event the originating agency is unsuccessful in its attempts to contact the victim, complainant, etc., the entering authority shall make a determination based on the best information and knowledge available whether or not to retain the original entry on file.

C. Maney v. Ratcliff

1. Subject was arrested on three (3) separate occasions based on an NCIC hit indicating that he was wanted by authorities on a felony narcotics charge, and each time was not extradited, and entry not removed.

2. Court ruled that failure to take the entry out of NCIC "evinced a reckless and careless disregard for the subject's constitutional rights."
4. To avoid this kind of liability procedures should be adopted that would more timely identify invalid warrants in order to remove them from file.
5. Also see Indiana 240 IAC 5-1-1, ... restrictions on use.

Accuracy is essential as is promptness in entering, modifying, locating, or clearing records in the system. Each record on file is identified with the agency originating that record and that agency alone is responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and correct status of that record at all times.

D. Terry Dean Rogan v City of Los Angeles

1. Rogan sued the city and two police officers for constantly being arrested and released based on an erroneous NCIC entry made by the officers.
 - a. Officers continually re-entered an NCIC entry even though the data was in error.
2. The court held that the officers were not liable because they had not been trained on how to change data within the NCIC record and that the City was liable because they made no effort to train officers in proper use of the system.
3. To avoid this kind of liability training should be given to all personnel in the proper operation of the system (not just operators/coordinators).

4. Also see Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-8,
Terminal Agency Operation....

Agency Operation- Internal. Once operational on the IDACS System, each terminal agency is required to designate one individual as coordinator to serve as liaison between that department and the IDACS Committee. It is important that the person selected becomes familiar with all phases of IDACS to efficiently carry out all duties and responsibilities assigned. Duties and responsibilities are to:

Insure that all agency personnel (including any non-terminal agencies serviced) utilizing system information are aware of the rules and policies of the IDACS/NCIC/NLETS System...

and Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-11 IDACS Training.

Insure that terminal operators receive proper training in accordance with the IDACS Certification Training Program.

All IDACS Terminal operators (including mobile terminals) shall be trained and tested for their proficiency at operating the IDACS terminal. All IDACS Coordinators shall be trained and tested for their proficiency at operating the IDACS terminal and for their skills as the coordinator.

To insure that terminal operators and coordinators are familiar with the laws governing IDACS/NCIC/NLETS, System rules, regulations, and procedures, and what files (functions) are available and how to utilize them properly.

Create an awareness of IDACS/NCIC/NLETS System capabilities in order to allow criminal justice agencies to obtain maximum use of the system.

All persons assigned a system password (Operator Identifier) to operate the IDACS terminal and persons designated IDACS Coordinator by their agency shall be trained and tested according to the guidelines set forth by the IDACS Committee and approved by the State Police Superintendent.

The IDACS Committee can authorize the removal of a system password(s), or impose sanctions on an agency for non-compliance with these procedures...

IV. Solutions and Tools To Minimize Risk

A. Operating Procedures

1. Local agencies should also have written departmental procedures which instruct employees to follow IDACS/NCIC rules, regulations, and procedures.
2. Use IDACS/NCIC Operating Manuals, and NCIC Code Manual.

B. Keep aware of needs and problems through IDACS Coordinator.

Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-8, Terminal Agency Operation....

Agency Operation-Internal. Once operational on the IDACS System, each terminal agency is required to designate one individual as coordinator to serve as liaison between that department and the IDACS Committee. It is important that the person selected becomes familiar with all phases of IDACS to efficiently carry out all duties and responsibilities assigned. Duties and responsibilities are to:

Insure that all agency personnel (including any non-terminal agencies serviced) utilizing system information are aware of the rules and policies of the IDACS/NCIC/NLETS System...

- C. Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-11,
...Training...

Sec. 11. All IDACS Terminal Operators (including mobile terminals) shall be trained and tested for their proficiency at operating the IDACS terminal. All IDACS Coordinators shall be trained and tested for their proficiency at operating the IDACS terminal and for their skills as the coordinator.

(1) All persons assigned a system password (operator Identifier) to operate the IDACS terminal and persons designated IDACS Coordinator by their agency shall be trained and tested according to the guidelines set forth by the IDACS Committee and approved by State Police Superintendent.

1. New operators must be certified within the first six months, and re-certified every two years thereafter.
2. New coordinators must be a certified operator and certified as a coordinator within six months after the appointment, and re-certified every two years thereafter.
3. Seminars are available for users of the system (records personnel, officers, administrators, probation officers, prosecutors, judges).
 - a. What is available on the system, rules for use of the data.
4. Seminars are available for administrators concerning liabilities that can occur in misuse of system data.

- D. Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-10
Security; confidentiality...

SYSTEM as used in the Security and Confidentiality Rules shall mean IDACS, NLETS, and/or NCIC

terminals, equipment and any and all data accessible from or stored therein.

(b) Who May Access SYSTEM Data.

(1) Access, meaning the ability to obtain information from the System, shall be permitted only to criminal justice agencies in the discharge of their official mandated responsibilities, and those agencies as required by state and/or federal enabling authority. Release of Indiana BMV data to non-criminal justice agencies may occur when it is determined to be in the best interest of law enforcement/ criminal justice to do so. Agencies that shall be permitted access to SYSTEM data include:

(A) Police forces and departments at all governmental levels (including private college and railroad police departments as authorized by Indiana Code) that are responsible for enforcement of general criminal laws.

(B) Prosecutive agencies and departments at all governmental levels.

(C) Courts at all governmental levels with a criminal or equivalent jurisdiction.

(D) Correction departments at all governmental levels, including corrective institutions and probation departments.

(E) Parole commissions and agencies at all governmental levels.

(F) Agencies at all governmental levels which have as a principal function the collection and provision of fingerprint identification information.

(G) Regional or local governmental organizations established pursuant to

statute which collect and process criminal justice information and whose policy and governing boards have, as a minimum, a majority composition of members representing criminal justice agencies.

(2) Limited access. Approved non-criminal justice agencies may have access to SYSTEM data on a limited basis. Limited basis shall mean restricted to only that data recommended through resolution by the IDACS Committee and approved by the State Police Superintendent.

- E. Follow Indiana Code 5-2-5-12 Indiana Data and Communications System; entry of information in computer.

On a daily basis, all law enforcement agencies shall enter into the Indiana Data and Communications (IDACS) computer the following:

(1) All information concerning any stolen or recovered property, including motor vehicles, firearms, securities, boats, license plates, and any other stolen or recovered property.

(2) All information concerning fugitives charged with any crime, including information concerning extradition.

(3) All information concerning runaways and missing persons, including information concerning the release of such persons to the custody of a parent or guardian.

- F. Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-9 IDACS/ NCIC hit confirmation procedures...

User Agency agrees to insure that hit confirmation is available 24 hours a day on records entered into the wanted files. This includes being able to provide a substantive response to an inquiry within 10 minutes...

1) Upon receipt of a hit confirmation request, the originating agency must within ten minutes furnish a substantive response, i.e., a positive or negative confirmation or notice of the time it will take to confirm or reject.

2) If no response is received by the requesting agency within ten minutes, send a second request.

3) If no response is received from the second request, send a third message and this time include the SP Data Operations Center, the State Control Terminal of the originating agency, and FBI NCIC. No action will be taken by NCIC, unless the two control terminal agencies cannot resolve the matter.

a. Verify warrants, review cases, and contact complainants to proper confirm hits.

G. Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-7,
Validation of Records...

1. Validation Definition:

(1) Validation (according to current NCIC/IDACS policy) obligates the originating agency to confirm the record is COMPLETE, ACCURATE and is still OUTSTANDING or ACTIVE.

(2) Validation is accomplished by reviewing the original entry and current supporting documents and by recent consultation with any appropriate complainant, victim, prosecutor, court, motor vehicle registry files or other appropriate source or individual. In the event the originating agency is unsuccessful in its attempts to contact the victim, complainant, etc., the entering authority shall make a determination based on the best information and knowledge available whether or not to retain the original entry on file.

2. Objectives of Validation Requirements

(1) To insure the validity of IDACS and NCIC records, administrative controls shall be maintained which will result in prompt updating for the benefit of system users.

(A) Agencies entering records in IDACS and/or NCIC are solely responsible for their accuracy, timeliness, and completeness.

(B) Only by conscientious validation of records can users remain assured the integrity of the system is being upheld, and inquiring officers can rely on the information in IDACS and NCIC.

3. on-line validation transaction must be completed.

- a. Records not validated will be purged.
- b. Records not active should be deleted from file by entering agency.
- c. A record left in the system, or a record that should have been validated and is purged could cause risk of liability to the originating agency if harm occurs to a third party due to this negligent act.

H. Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-9, ...Quality Assurance...

User Agency agrees to abide by accepted quality assurance methods. This includes compliance with validation procedures as specified in the Indiana Administrative Code, NCIC serious error procedures, and IDACS Quality Control procedures.

User Agency further agrees to establish local procedures whereby updates to the wanted files are reviewed for accuracy by comparing

the update with supporting documentation. This comparison shall be made by a person other than the operator who accomplished the update and the investigating officer who ordered it.

1. The following is a list of NCIC serious errors which when discovered are canceled by NCIC.
 - a. Wanted Person records which have an appended locate indicating the subject will be extradited.
 - b. Wanted Person records indicating the subject is wanted for questioning only.
 - c. Wanted Person records entered for missing persons.
 - d. Security File records that do not meet criteria in the type field (personal checks, cashiers checks, etc.).
 - e. Records entered for stolen credit cards.
 - f. Wanted Person records which have a MIS field statement indicating the individual will not be extradited, or extradited this state only.
 - g. Wanted Person record that has extradition limitations and the entering agency has not indicated as such in the MIS field.
 - h. A wanted file record containing inaccurate BMV or vehicular data which has been verified by a states motor vehicles files.
 - i. Records entered in the wrong file.
 - j. Property records allowed to remain in file in excess of ten days after the date of locate.

- k. Property records entered with non-unique serial numbers, owner applied number in the SER field, etc.
 - l. Property records entered with generic Brand or Make codes for which there is no further description in the MIS field.
 - 2. IDACS Quality Control Measures identify errors which could cause a missed hit, etc.
 - a. Review of daily logs.
 - 1) CHRI log
 - 2) Wanted File update log
 - 3) Switched message log
 - 3. Agency notified of error and asked correct immediately or cancel record.
- I. Follow Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-9, User Agreements

All IDACS user agencies shall complete a "User Agreement" before utilizing the system. Agencies with terminals and Statutory Police agencies shall complete such agreements with the Indiana State Police and the IDACS Committee. Non-terminal agencies shall complete an agreement with the terminal agency that services them.

- 1. Used as a communications tool to inform agencies as to system rules, regulations, state and federal laws concerning use of system data.
 - a. NCIC/Control Terminal Agency Agreement
 - b. IDACS/Terminal Agency Agreement
 - c. Terminal/Non-Terminal Agency Agreement
 - d. Control Terminal/Statutory Agency Agreement

2. Terminal Agency should document violations of rules and regulations and show that they have been discussed with the offending agency before canceling any agreement.

J. Audits (IDACS Security Inspections)

1. Periodic announced and unannounced inspections are made to identify areas for improvement.
2. Areas inspected include:
 - a. compliance with terminal security
 - b. compliance with operator certification program
 - c. compliance with records keeping rules
 - d. compliance with accepted validation procedures
 - e. are manuals up-to-date
 - f. are newsletters up-to-date
 - g. are agreements up-to-date
3. Areas for improvement discussed with the coordinator and/or agency head.

K. Indiana 240 IAC 5-2-12, IDACS Sanctions

The IDACS Committee shall review Violations of IDACS/NCIC/NLETS Rules and Operational Procedures and make recommendations to the State Police Superintendent to impose Sanctions on user Agencies.

(A) Objectives of the Sanction Procedure

- (1) Develop and implement, with the State Police Superintendent's approval, a sanction procedure for SYSTEM rules, regulations and procedures violations.

(2) Create an awareness among user agencies of the importance of following rules, regulations, and procedures in order to minimize the risk to liabilities that may be incurred by misuse of the SYSTEM and its data.

(B) Sanction Requirements

(1) Shall be in accordance with current NCIC/NLETS Sanction guidelines.

(2) Require the User Agency Head to reply within 30 days of the receipt of a notice of violation or probation as to the steps being taken to correct the situation.

(3) Create sanction procedures that include: verbal and written warnings, written notices of violation, written notices of probation, temporary and permanent suspension of service.

(4) Temporary or permanent suspension of service to begin after the agency head receives the suspension notice.

2. NCIC Sanctions in place to assist Control Terminal Agency in enforcement of system regulations.

L. Risk Analysis Survey for the Wanted Person File

Risk in the Wanted Person File results from procedures that expose the agency to civil suit due to the lack of sufficient care in maintaining records. The risk identified is a record entered in IDACS/NCIC containing inaccurate and incomplete information, that is, a record not being cleared when appropriate. Either risk is significant and may result in the arrest of an innocent citizen, the failure to arrest a sought-after criminal, or the death of an unsuspecting officer.

The following evaluation can help identify weaknesses in an agency's

policies.

Instructions For Completing This
Evaluation

For each of the following questions,
select the appropriate answer for your
agency's situation. Circle the
corresponding number. Add the circled
numbers, then compare the total to the
risk level ranges listed after the last
question.

1. Documentation of Entry Procedures.
 - a. Written procedure and checklist 1
 - b. Written procedure or checklist 2
 - c. Well-defined oral procedures 5
 - d. No well-defined procedures 10
2. Type of warrants entered.
 - a. Felony only 1
 - b. Felony and serious misdemeanors 3
 - c. All warrants 10
3. Extradition review
 - a. Formal review of extradition
by appropriate authority,
confirmed in writing 1
 - b. Formal review, but not
confirmed in writing 2
 - c. Informal review 4
 - d. No extradition review 10
4. Basis for entry
 - a. Entry made using original
warrant 1
 - b. Entry made using copy of
warrant, with established
control to ensure notification
if dismissed 2
 - c. Entry made using copy of
warrant, no controls 5
 - d. Entry by written request, no
warrant 7
 - e. Entry by oral request, no
warrant 10
5. Quality control procedures
 - a. criminal history records
checked, entry checked by
third person, entry message
filed 1

b.	Criminal history records checked, entry checked by third person	2
c.	Entry checked by third person, entry message filed	4
d.	Criminal history records checked, entry message filed	5
e.	Entry checked by third person	6
f.	Criminal history records checked	7
g.	Entry message filed	9
h.	No quality assurance measures	10
6.	Validation procedure	
a.	Total compliance with validation definition	1
b.	No compliance with validation definition	10
7.	Hit confirmation	
a.	original warrant verified, case report reviewed	1
b.	original warrant verified	3
c.	Case report reviewed	5
d.	Card file or log book reviewed	7
e.	No satisfactory procedures	10
	If written procedures exist, subtract one point.	
8.	Documentation of procedures for clearing entries	
a.	Written procedure and checklist	1
b.	Written procedure or checklist	2
c.	Well-defined oral procedures	5
d.	No well-defined procedures	10

Risk Level

LOW RISK	Less than 21 points
MODERATE RISK	21 through 34 points
HIGH RISK	35 or more points

Within each of the individual categories, risk is assessed as follows:

- 1-3 Low Risk
- 4-7 Moderate Risk- procedures should be reviewed and improved where possible.
- 8-10 High Risk- procedures are

insufficient must be improved
immediately.

M. Risk Analysis for the Vehicle File

Risk in the Vehicle File results from procedures that expose the agency to civil suit due to the lack of sufficient care in maintaining records. The risk identified is a record entered in IDACS/NCIC containing inaccurate and incomplete information, that is, information that will result in an erroneous hit or will prevent a proper hit from occurring. It is also defined as the record not being cleared when appropriate. Either risk is significant and may result in the arrest of an innocent citizen, the failure to arrest a sought-after criminal, or the death of an unsuspecting officer.

The following evaluation can help identify weaknesses in an agency's policies.

Instructions For Completing This
Evaluation

For each of the following questions, select the appropriate answer for your agency's situation. circle the corresponding number. Add the circled numbers, then compare the total to the risk level ranges listed after the last question.

1. Documentation of Entry Procedures.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| a. Written procedure and checklist | 1 |
| b. Written procedure or checklist | 2 |
| c. Well-defined oral procedures | 5 |
| d. No well-defined procedures | 10 |

2. Basis for entry

- | | |
|--|----|
| a. Officers report (written or oral),
complainants written
acknowledgement required. | 1 |
| b. officers report (written or oral) | 2 |
| c. Oral report by complainant,
follow up by officer within
12 hours | 6 |
| d. Oral report by complainant,
no follow up | 10 |

3. Quality control procedures

a.	BMV checked, entry checked by third person, entry message filed	1
b.	BMV checked, entry checked by a third person	2
c.	Entry checked by a third person, entry message filed	4
d.	BMV checked, entry message filed	5
e.	Entry checked by a third person	6
f.	BMV checked	7
g.	Entry message filed	9
h.	No quality assurance measures	10
4.	Validation procedure	
a.	Total compliance with validation definition	1
b.	No compliance with validation definition	10
5.	Hit confirmation	
a.	Case report used for hit confirmation	1
b.	Log book or card file used for hit confirmation	8
c.	No satisfactory procedures	10
6.	Documentation of procedures for clearing entries	
a.	Written procedure and checklist	1
b.	Written procedure or checklist	2
c.	Well-defined oral procedures	5
d.	No well-defined procedures	10

Risk Level

LOW RISK Less than 13 points
 MODERATE RISK 13 through 28 points
 HIGH RISK 28 or more points

Within each of the individual categories, risk is assessed as follows:

1-3 Low Risk
 4-7 Moderate Risk- procedures should be reviewed and improved where possible.
 8-10 High Risk- procedures are insufficient and must be improved immediately.

V. Summary

A. Suggested Additional Reading

1. [Part I, IDACS Manual](#)
 2. Intro Section, NCIC Manual
 3. Section 10 (111), NCIC Manual
 4. NCIC Publications
 - a. The investigative tool
 - b. NCIC Off-Line Search
 - c. Extradition of Wanted Persons
 - d. Areas of Liability
 5. Federal Title 28
 - a. As it relates to use of criminal history.
- B. IDACS/NCIC importance to law enforcement/ criminal justice.
1. All of our efforts are needed to continue to keep the system a viable and efficient law enforcement tool.
- C. Importance of Liabilities
1. It is important for criminal justice administrators to understand the civil liabilities that could be incurred for mishandling of system data.
 2. Following system rules, regulations, procedures could reduce the risk of liabilities.